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SUBJECT: MINISTER OF TRANSPORT ADAMANT THAT TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE
PROJECTS ARE ON SCHEDULE FOR 2010 FIFA WORLD CUP

REF: A) JOHANNESBURG 17; B) DURBAN 21

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[¶1.](#) (U) Summary: Minister of Transport Jeffrey Radebe told an audience at the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry that South Africa is spending billions of Rands to develop efficient, safe, and reliable public transportation systems for the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Major airport and road construction projects are on schedule. Trains, buses, and minibus taxis will receive necessary funds for upgrades. Durban plans to revamp its public transportation system and improve roads. The government faces a difficult task in ensuring that the 2010 projects have a longer-term impact in the development of reliable, safe, and affordable transportation systems. End Summary.

Billions of Rands Invested to Improve Transport Infrastructure

[¶2.](#) (U) Minister of Transport Jeffrey Radebe provided a briefing on 2010 FIFA World Cup preparations at an event hosted by the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) and attended by Pol/Econ Assistant on March 27. Radebe noted that the South African Government (SAG) has allocated more than R100 billion Rands (\$10.9 billion) to improve South Africa's transportation infrastructure in preparation for the World Cup. Radebe said R13.6 billion (\$1.4 billion) was allocated for the improvement of public transportation, R25 billion (\$2.7 billion) for airports, 70 billion Rands (\$7.6 billion) for road construction and refurbishment, R7.7 billion (\$835 million) for the minibus recapitalization program, and R18 billion (\$1.9 billion) for railway improvements. Radebe was adamant that all host cities will be ready for the world cup in 2010. `Don't believe everything [negative] you read in the media. South Africa is rolling with 2010,' said Radebe. (Comment: Like Radebe, most of the officials involved in the transportation upgrade planning process are confident that public transportation systems will run smoothly during the World Cup despite alleged concerns from FIFA that South Africa will not be ready for the games. End Comment.)

Airports on Course for Take Off

[¶3.](#) (U) Minister Radebe and Airport Companies of South Africa (ACSA) KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Regional Director Bongani Maseko reported that work is progressing well at the site of the new La Mercy International Airport, north of Durban. Both stated confidently that the airport will be completed by April 2010. The airport will cost R4.3 billion (approximately \$470 million) to build, will cater for 7.5 million passengers a year, and is 56 percent complete. The official airport name has not yet been decided as it must be approved by the Department of Arts and

Culture. Radebe also reported that refurbishments to the international airports in Johannesburg and Cape Town are 'at an advanced stage' (Ref A).

Durban Revamps its Public Transport System, Improves Roads

¶4. (U) Durban's public transportation infrastructure is the biggest challenge facing the World Cup host city ahead of the World Cup, acknowledged eThekweni Municipality Head of Strategic Projects Julie May-Ellingson (Ref B). Durban's improvement plan includes the refurbishment of the N3 and Inkosi Albert Luthuli highways, and the establishment of the Warwick Junction Development, a public transportation hub with retail and economic centers. The Warwick project is the most important Durban transportation project to be launched in 20 years. In addition, a public multipurpose hub will be set up to improve Durban's public transport information system. It will include an information call center that will be operational by June 2009, said Ellingson. Touch-screen information kiosks will be placed in major shopping malls with information about public transportation.

¶5. (U) Ellingson reported that Durban will establish a Central Public Transport Hub in the Central Business District, which will greatly improve public transport accessibility. A Fan Park Transport Plan is currently being developed. It will include restricted parking zones, bus parking facilities and safe, clean and easy-to-access pedestrian routes. Durban will rely mostly on bus and rail services for 2010 but will also give some routes to minibus taxi operators. Ellingson is confident that Durban will accomplish its transportation goals for the 2010 World Cup.

Better Trains, Refurbished Stations

¶6. (U) KZN District Manager Danny Hatting told the DCCI gathering that Metrorail is currently implementing an operational enhancement plan in preparation for the 2010 World

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Cup. This plan includes train station refurbishments, including R30 million Rands for Durban alone, training and deployment of additional staff, and 700 security personnel which will be deployed in the Durban railway sector.

¶7. (U) Metrorail is improving its Passenger Communication Systems (PCS) in preparation for the 2010 World Cup. The first phase of the PCS is currently being implemented in five train stations in Durban and the surrounding areas. The new PCS includes electronic billboards and on-board communication devices. Twenty new trains with the new communication system and safety features are already in operation and seven more will be added by 2010, according to Hatting. Durban expects to have one of the most efficient, safe, and reliable public rail system in the country that will serve its residents beyond the 2010 World Cup.

Comment

¶8. (SBU) SAG World Cup-related transportation plans for the development of bus-rapid-transit-systems have already suffered due to many violent protests from minibus taxi operators, who object to the plans out of fears that their business interests will be adversely affected. Despite government assurances of continued autonomy for the minibus industry, minibus operators are not convinced of these promises. As a result, clouds continue to hang over South Africa's World Cup transportation plans. Poor public transportation infrastructure is the one of the biggest challenges facing post-apartheid urban and peri-urban South Africa. Over the years, there have been many violent protests linked to unreliable public transportation, including the burning of trains in Gauteng and numerous strikes by minibus taxi operators in KZN. Industry analysts also note that the long-term viability of World Cup-related transport projects would depend on the SAG's ability to address safety and security shortfalls in existing and proposed public transportation systems. Many South African citizens remain

hopeful, however, that one of the most important and visible legacies of the 2010 World Cup will be the development of a reliable, safe, and affordable transportation system.

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